

R.A. SALVATORE

FORGOTTEN REALMS



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48 PAGES!



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THE LEGEND OF
DRIZZT
BOOK
II

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at the Savannah College of Art & Design for
their contribution to this issue.

Far beneath the surface of the FORGOTTEN
REALMS, in the vast realm known as the
UNDERDARK...

A decade has passed since DRIZZT DO'URDEN
abandoned his evil kin, the DROW. After
nearly succumbing to crushing loneliness, he
has seemingly found acceptance among the
peaceful DEEP GNOMES, and a close friend
in BELWAR. But even as Drizzt began to
settle into the tranquil existence of his new
benefactors, a figure from his past has been
dispatched to hunt him down.

MATRON MALICE, Drizzt's mother, has
resurrected from the grave the only Drow
he ever loved — his father and mentor,
ZAKNAFEIN. Only Zaknafein can equal
Drizzt's deadly skills — and now, his spirit
twisted by Malice's arcane magic, Zak has
become the young warrior's greatest enemy.

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*A dark tunnel less than a day's march
from the gnomish city of Blingdenstone...*



W==WHAT
COULD DO THIS? HOOK
HORRORS, OR--

NO. THE CUTS
ARE TOO CLEAN,
TOO PRECISE.

ONLY ONE
CREATURE IN ALL THE
UNDERDARK COULD INFLICT
WOUNDS SUCH AS THESE.



DROW.

Blingsdenstone...

DARK ELVES
SO CLOSE TO OUR CITY!
IT'S AN ACT OF WAR!

IF MENZOBERRANZAN
PLANNED WAR, THEY WOULD NOT
LEAVE A DOZEN DEAD GOBLINS FOR
ONE OF OUR PATROLS TO FIND,
KING SCHNICKTICK.

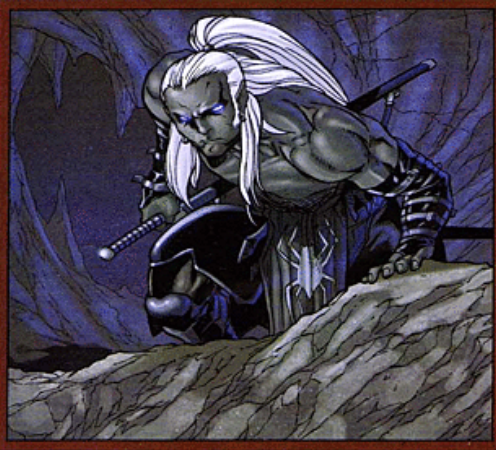
TRUE, TRUE:
THEN WHAT?

EXPANSION!

SLAVERY!

RENEGADE RAIDERS!





NO.

STAY YOUR
HAND, ZAKNAFEIN.
THEY ARE NOT OUR QUARRY—
OUR SON IS.



PATIENCE, MY PET.
PATIENCE.

*The spirit-wraith snarled as Matron Malice's
psychic command echoed in his mind.*

*The goblins had sated his bloodlust
for a time, but now it was back.
He needed to hunt, needed to kill.*

Zak had been wandering these tunnels for weeks, searching.



He knew Drizzt was close, but somehow the boy remained just out of reach.



Something was hiding Drizzt, protecting him.

The thought infuriated Zak.

Each day he spent in this world was torture, and Zak longed to leave it once again—to return to the sweet embrace of death.

Yet he could not. He had a task to perform.



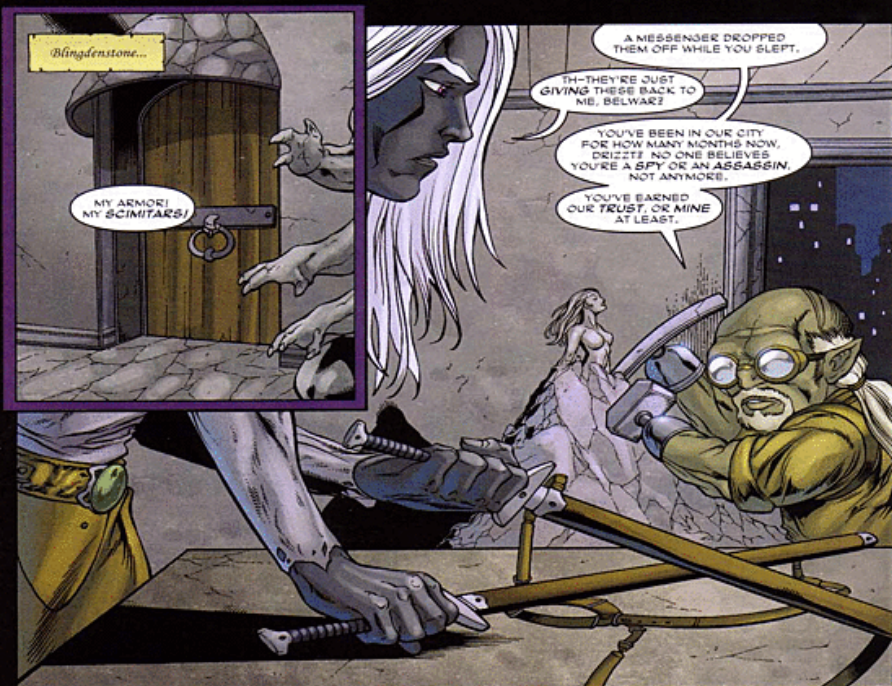
In life, Zak would have rebelled. He had been a man of will and honor, one of the few in all the Underdark who could make that claim.



But no more. Now his body and soul belonged to Matron Malice.



And only when he drove his swords into Drizzt's heart would Zaknafein know peace once again.









BUT IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT! THE BLAME LIES ON THE SHOULDERS OF MY PEOPLE!

IT IS THE WAY OF THE DROW THAT CAUSED THE TRAGEDY. IT IS THE WICKED EXISTENCE THEY LIVE, EVERY DAY, THAT DOOMED YOUR EXPEDITION'S PEACEABLE NINGED!



ALL THOSE WHO ACCOMPANIED YOU KNEW THE RISKS. THERE IS NO REASON FOR YOU TO SIT HERE, Mired in GUILT.

I THOUGHT YOU POSSESSED MORE COURAGE THAN THAT.

BOLDLY DO YOU SPEAK.

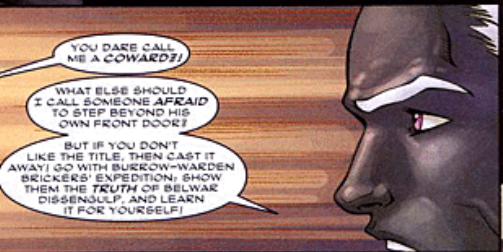
BOLDLY TO A COWARD!



YOU DARE CALL ME A COWARD?!

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I CALL SOMEONE AFRAID TO STEP BEYOND HIS OWN FRONT DOOR?

BUT IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE TITLE, THEN CAST IT AWAY! GO WITH BURROW-WARDEN BRICKER'S EXPEDITION. SHOW THEM THE TRUTH OF BELWAK DISSENSULP, AND LEARN IT FOR YOURSELF!



MADDA CANNIKKA...



PUT ON YOUR SNEEDS, SLF. IF I'M TO GO, THEN SO ARE YOU!

Burrow-Warden Brickers accepted Belwar and Drizzet readily, **honored** by the presence of the former, and happy to have the **blades** of the latter...

...especially if the whispers of drow activity in the tunnels around Blingdenstone proved to be true.

But, as luck would have it, the expedition saw no activity or carnage on their way to the region named by the **mineral scouts**.

The reports of a thick vein of ore were not exaggerated, and the miners went to work with unmatched eagerness.

For there is nothing a **svirfneblin** relishes more than the sound of his pick striking stone, and the sweet smell of freshly mined ore.

None were more pleased than Belwar, whose hammer and pickaxe sliced away at the stone with incredible **precision** and **power**.

Out here, for the first time in many years, he **belonged**. Belwar was truly a member of the expedition—an **honored member**—who filled the wagons with more ore than any of his companions.

As for Drizzet, he spent the days patrolling the twisting tunnels around the dig site.

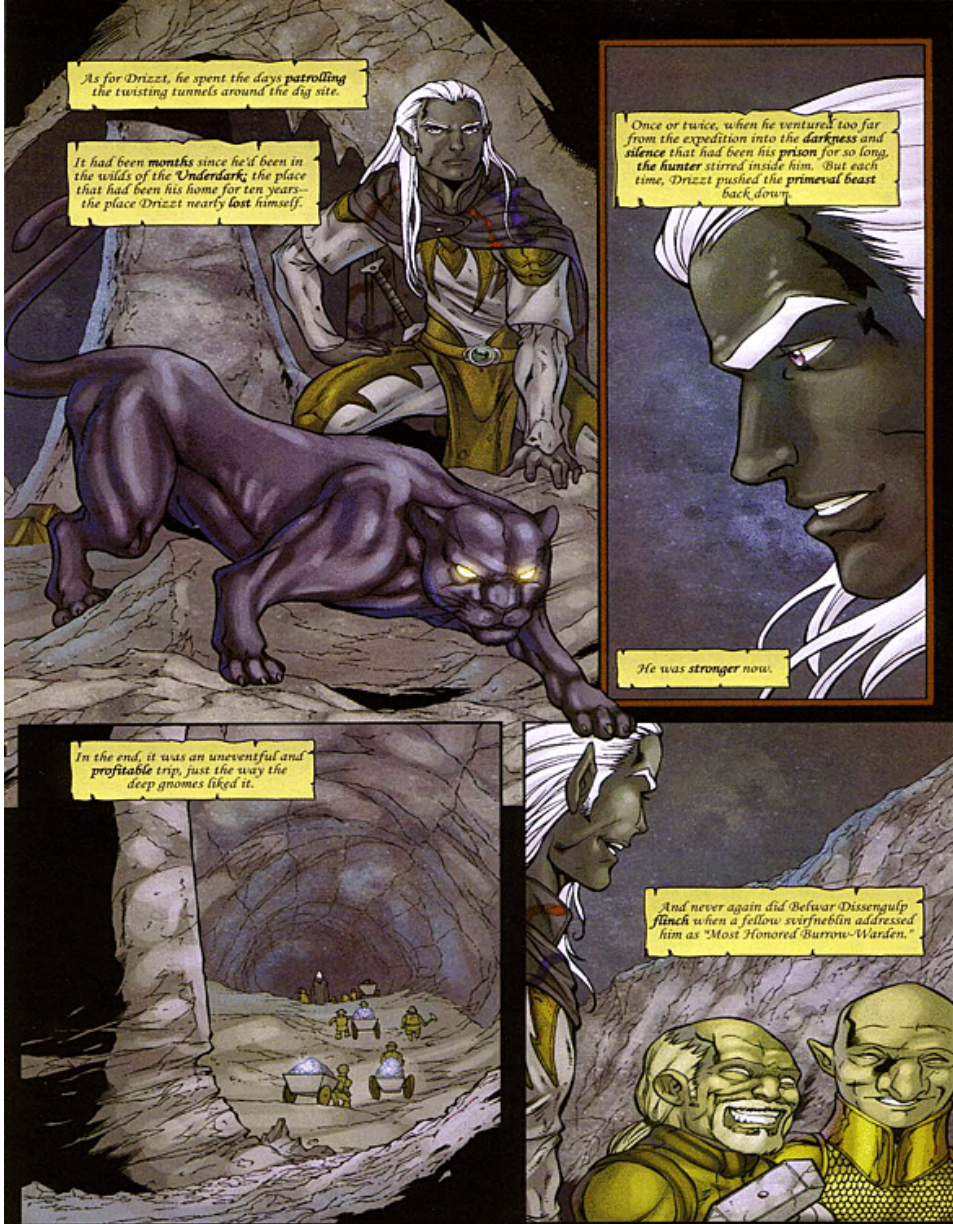
It had been months since he'd been in the wilds of the Underdark, the place that had been his home for ten years--the place Drizzet nearly lost himself.

Once or twice, when he ventured too far from the expedition into the darkness and silence that had been his prison for so long, the hunter stirred inside him. But each time, Drizzet pushed the primal beast back down.

He was stronger now.

In the end, it was an uneventful and profitable trip, just the way the deep gnomes liked it.

And never again did Belvax Dissengulp flinch when a fellow svirfneblin addressed him as "Most Honored Burrow-Warden."



Meanwhile, elsewhere
in the Underdark...

GREETINGS, LITTLE FRIEND
WITH THE BIG PURSE.

YOU COULD
EXERCISE SOME CAUTION,
CARLAXLE.

HAH! YOU HAVE AN
ARMY OF DEEP GNOME FIGHTERS
AND WIZARDS BEHIND YOU, AND
I--WELL, LET'S JUST SAY
THAT I TOO AM
WELL PROTECTED.

STILL, I WOULD
PREFER OUR BUSINESS
REMAIN PRIVATE.

OF COURSE, ALL OF THE
BUSINESS OF BREGAN D'AERKTHE
IS PRIVATE, MY DEAR FIBBLE.

NOW, ASK
YOUR QUESTION.

THERE HAS BEEN
AN INCREASE IN DROW ACTIVITY
NEAR BLINDENSTONE, I WISH
TO KNOW WHY.

I SEE. AND
MY PAYMENT?

PAYMENT WHEN YOU
BRING ME THE INFORMATION,
THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN
OUR ARRANGEMENT!

AND IT
JUST SO HAPPENS
THAT I CAN ANSWER YOUR
QUESTION NOW, IF YOU
HAVE THE GEMS.

FIFTY AGATES,
FINELY CUT.



REST EASY, LITTLE FRIEND, FOR THE POWERS WHO RULE MENZOBERKANZAN PLAN NO ACTIONS AGAINST YOUR CITY.

ONLY A SINGLE DEWD HOUSE HAS AN INTEREST IN THE REGION. IT SEARCHES FOR ONE OF ITS OWN-- A RENEGADE.



NAME THE HOUSE AND THE RENEGADE.

TWO MORE BITS OF HIGH PRICED INFORMATION. THIS IS PROVING QUITE AN EXPENSIVE OUTING FOR YOU--

NO MORE WILL I PAY YOU THIS DAY. GADLAXLE! NAME THEM!



HOUSE DO'URDEN, EIGHTH HOUSE OF MENZOBERKANZAN, SEARCHES FOR ITS SECONDBOY.

DRIZZT IS HIS NAME.



I SEE.

NO, YOU DON'T. I OFFER A WARNING, FREE OF CHARGE. IF YOU KNOW OF DRIZZT DO'URDEN, KEEP HIM FAR AWAY.

THE GODDESS LOTH HERSELF HAS CHARGED MATRON MALICE DO'URDEN WITH THE BOY'S DEATH, AND MALICE WILL DO WHATEVER SHE MUST TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASK.

DRIZZT IS DOOMED, AND SO DOOMED WILL BE ANY FOOLISH ENOUGH TO STAND BESIDE HIM.



A--AN UNNECESSARY WARNING, FOR NONE IN BLINDENSTONE KNOW OR CARE FOR THIS RENEGADE DARK ELF.

NOW, I HAVE MY ANSWERS AND YOU HAVE YOUR GEMS. OUR BUSINESS IS AT AN END.



OF COURSE, FIBBLE. IT WAS MY PLEASURE, AS ALWAYS.

For Drizzt, the days after the expedition's return were filled with friendship and fun.

He was something of a hero with the *vesfnebl* who had gone out into the tunnels beside him, and already Belwar was planning another mining expedition.

It was indeed one of the happiest times the young elf had ever experienced.

And so when the urgent summons from King Schmicktick came that morning, he was hardly surprised.

After all, Drizzt's life had been filled with crashing ends to promising beginnings.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

MOST HONORED BURROW-WARDEN, IT IS NOT YOUR PLACE TO INTERRUPT. IF YOU DO SO AGAIN, I WILL BE FORCED TO HAVE YOU REMOVED FROM THIS CHAMBER.

B--BUT YOU MEAN TO PUT HIM OUT!

YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE SUSPECTED DROW ACTIVITY IN THE TUNNELS NEAR OUR EASTERN BORDERS?

YES.

YOU, DRIZZT DOWRDEN, ARE THE CAUSE OF THAT ACTIVITY.



MY MOTHER SEARCHES FOR ME.

BUT SHE WILL NOT FIND YOU!



MAGGA CAMMARAJ
WE ARE SVIRFNEBLI! WE DON'T
PUT OUT OUR FRIENDS IN
THE FACE OF DANGER!

ENOUGH, BELWAR!



OUR DECISION DID
NOT COME EASILY TO US,
BUT IT IS FINAL.

TO KEEP DRIZZT
HERE WOULD INVITE WAR WITH
MENZOBERRANZAN, AND I WILL NOT
PUT BLINGDENSTONE IN JEOPARDY
FOR THE SAKE OF A DARK ELF,
EVEN IF HE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF
TO BE A FRIEND.



I AM SORRY.

DON'T BE. YOU DO
AS YOU MUST. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO
INVOKES THE WRATH OF MY KIN AGAINST
THE PEOPLE OF YOUR CITY WHO HAVE
BEEN SO KIND TO ME.

I WOULD NEVER
FORGIVE MYSELF IF I PLAYED
ANY PART IN THAT TRAGEDY.



I WILL BE GONE
WITHIN THE HOUR, AND IN
PARTING I OFFER ONLY
GRATITUDE.

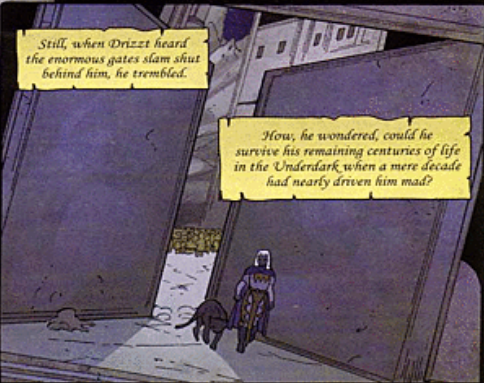
A hundred deep gnomes came to say their farewells to the drow as he walked out of Blingdenstone's huge doors.

Their kind words comforted him and gave him the strength he knew he would need in the trials of the coming years.



Still, when Drizzt heard the enormous gates slam shut behind him, he trembled.

Now, he wondered, could he survive his remaining centuries of life in the Underdark when a mere decade had nearly driven him mad?



How could he keep the hunter at bay?





SO, GUENHWYVAR,
ONCE AGAIN IT'S JUST
THE TWO OF US.

THREE.



BELWAR!
YOU CAME TO SAY
GOODBYE.

NOPE,
I DIDN'T.



I'VE BEEN LOOKING
FOR SOME EXCITEMENT IN MY LIFE.
THOUGHT I MIGHT VENTURE OUT AND
SEE WHAT THE WIDE WORLD
HAS TO OFFER.

YOU--NO, I
CAN'T ALLOW--

I DON'T
REMEMBER ASKING
YOUR PERMISSION.

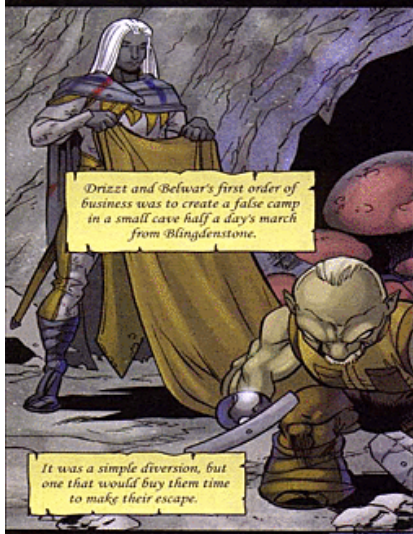


STAY, BELWAR!
YOU HAVE YOUR PEOPLE. THEY
ACCEPT YOU AND CARE FOR YOU.
THAT IS A GREATER GIFT THAN
ANYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE.

AGREED, AND YOU, DRIZZT
DO'URDEN, HAVE YOUR FRIEND WHO
ACCEPTS YOU, CARES FOR YOU, AND
STANDS BESIDE YOU EVEN WHEN
NO ONE ELSE WILL.



NOW LET'S GET ON WITH
THIS ADVENTURE BEFORE THAT
WICKED MOTHER OF YOURS WALKS UP
AND CUTS US TO RIBBONS.



Drizzt and Belwar's first order of business was to create a false camp in a small cave half a day's march from Blingdenstone.

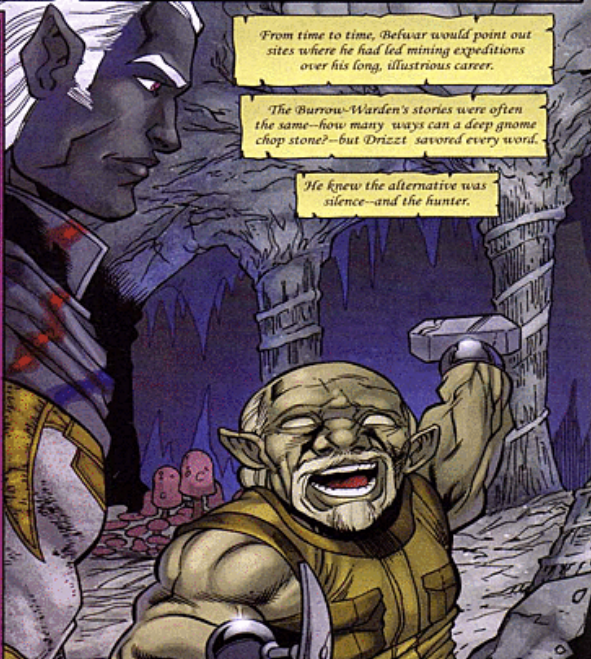
It was a simple diversion, but one that would buy them time to make their escape.



Then they set off west, away from Menzoberranzan and whoever, or whatever, was hunting Drizzt.



The companions traveled quickly, stopping only when weariness or hunger forced a break in the march.



From time to time, Belwar would point out sites where he had led mining expeditions over his long, illustrious career.

The Burrow-Warden's stories were often the same—how many ways can a deep gnome chop stone?—but Drizzt savored every word.

He knew the alternative was silence—and the hunter.

Still, the Underdark had not changed during Drizzt's short absence.

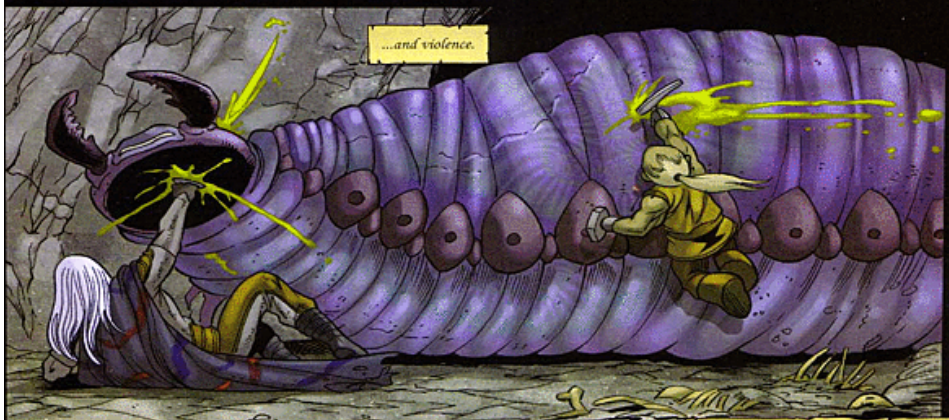
It was still a place of monsters...

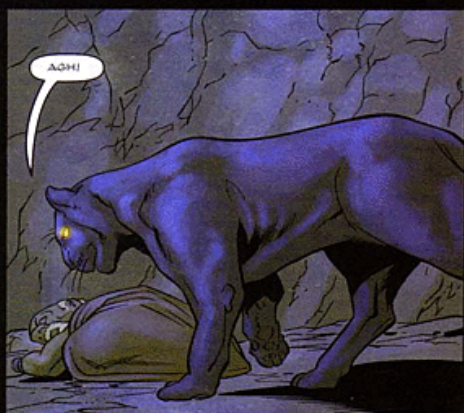
...hardship...

...and violence.

For Drizzt, the Burrow-Warden was an anchor to reality—an antidote to the savagery of this dark place.

And though Drizzt may have asked Belwar not to come, deep down he knew he needed the stubborn gnome.





Days passed, then weeks, as the trio continued their journey out into tunnels even Belwar didn't know.

Tunnels that seemed darker and stranger than those that had come before.

THAT LIGHT,
WHAT IS IT?

SHALL WE FIND OUT?

MAGGA CAMMARAI!

THE STONE, IT'S
BEEN MELTED AWAY.

AYE, THOSE
POOLS ARE FILLED
WITH ACID.

I DO NOT
LIKE THIS PLACE.

DOOM!

DOOM!

DOOM!

DOOM!



DOOM!

RELATIVES
OF YOURS!

DOOM!

HARDLY. IN ALL
MY LIFE, I HAVE NEVER
HEARD OF SUCH
CREATURES.



WELL, WHATEVER
THEY ARE, THEY AREN'T
PLEASED TO SEE US.

YOU'RE WRONG.
I BELIEVE THEY ARE
QUITE HAPPY TO HAVE THEIR
DINNER DELIVERED
TO THEM.

DOOM!

DOOM!



I'M NO
MONSTER'S
DINNER!

BIVEPI!

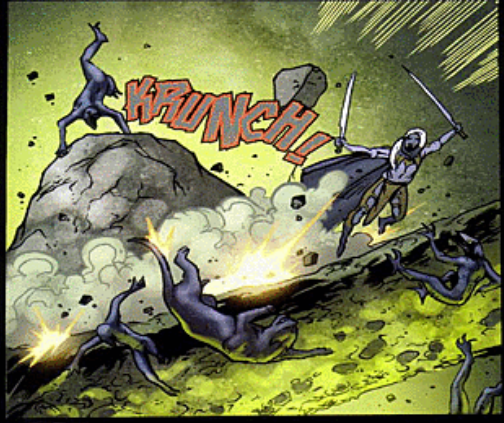


COME NOW, DARK ELF.
DID YOU REALLY THINK MY
PEOPLE WOULD GO TO THE TROUBLE
OF MAKING ME SUCH FINE HANDS
WITHOUT PUTTING A BIT OF
MAGIC INTO THEM?



NOW,
I BELIEVE THE EXIT'S
THAT WAY.

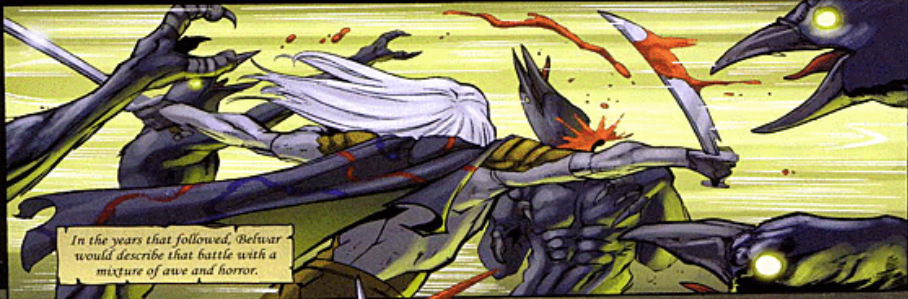




Drizzt knew Guenhwyvar was not dead... she had survived worse. A few days on her own plane, and the panther would be whole again.

But that did not change the fact he had just watched his oldest and best friend suffer excruciating pain.

Drizzt welcomed the hunter.



In the years that followed, Belwar would describe that battle with a mixture of awe and horror.



The Burrow-Warden had seen his share of great warriors, both gnome and drow.

But what Drizzt became was beyond Belwar's comprehension. Too fast, precise, and deadly to be real.

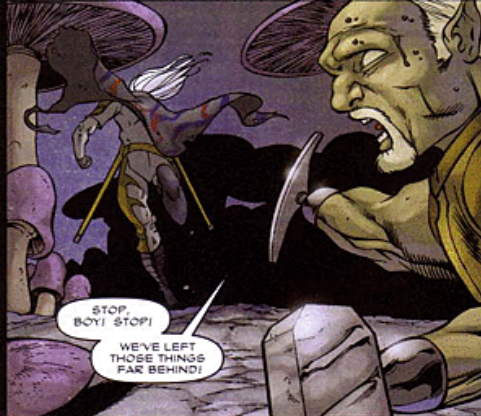


As the bird-men fell before the dark elf's spinning scimitars, the old gnome actually found himself feeling sorry for them.

They'd expected to trap a few wayward travelers...



...and instead come face to face with death incarnate.



The two friends continued on into the darkness, side by side.

Her fur was still singed, but otherwise, the great cat was fine, and happy to see her master.

Three days after the battle, Drizzt summoned Guenhwyvar from her astral home.

Then, quite by accident, they found it.

BEAUTIFUL!

SMALL ENOUGH TO DEFEND, BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO LIVE IN, WITH MUSHROOMS TO KEEP OUR BELLIES FULL, AND A LAKE FULL OF FISH—MAYBE EVEN CRABS!

BELWAR, DO YOU MEAN—

MAGGA CAMMARA, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, ELF! WE'VE RUN LONG ENOUGH, AND THIS PLACE IS PERFECT!

IT'S HOME!



House Do'Urden...

FIND HIM!

MATRON MALICE,
WE HEARD YOUR CRIES.

ALL IS
WELL, VIENNA.

YOUR WAYWARD
BROTHER HAS MANAGED TO
ESCAPE US ONCE AGAIN, BUT NO
MORE. ZAKNAFEIN HAS
HIS SCENT NOW.

DEIZET MAY HAVE A
WEEK OR MORE'S LEAD, BUT HE
ALSO MUST SLEEP, REST, AND EAT.
THE SPIRIT-WEAITH HAS NONE OF
THOSE WEAKNESSES.

THE HUNT
WILL BE OVER SOON
ENOUGH.

AND WHAT OF YOU,
MOTHER? YOU BARELY EAT,
AND HAVE NOT SLEPT IN SO
LONG. I WORRY.

I'M SURE YOU DO,
BRIZA. AFTER ALL,
WERE I TO PERISH, YOU
WOULD BECOME
MATRON.

I-- I DID
NOT MEAN--

OF COURSE
YOU DID. IT'S ONLY
NATURAL.

BUT KNOW THIS, MY
DAUGHTERS... I AM STILL
STRONG ENOUGH TO RULE
THIS HOUSE.

AND THOUGH ZIN-CARLA
TAKES A GREAT TOLL, THE REWARDS
WE'LL BE GRANTED WHEN I PRESENT
DEIZET'S HEART TO LOTH SHALL
OUTWEIGH IT A HUNDREDFOLD!

HOUSE DO'URDEN
WILL RETURN TO THE
SPIDER QUEEN'S FAVOR,
AND A PLACE OF HONOR
IN MENOBERRANZANI.

NO MATTER
WHAT THE COST, WE
WILL TRIUMPH!

As the days passed, Drizzet was forced to admit that Belwar had been right.

It felt good not to have to run anymore.

This place, one he could call his own, rich in food and friends, was a greater gift than Drizzet had ever imagined.

Indeed, the more time they spent there, the more the cozy little cavern began to feel like home.

KRAKE! KRAK! KRAKE! KRAK!

DARK ELF?
WHAT--?

THAT SOUND,
I KNOW IT.

HOOK
HORROR!



PECH?

NOT... AS
I... APPEAR.
I AM... PECH.

ROCK CHILDREN.
STRANGE LITTLE CREATURES.
HARD AS STONE AND LIVING FOR
NO OTHER REASON THAN
TO WORK IT.

BUT THERE ARE NOT
MANY OF THEM ABOUT, AND
FEWER STILL THAT LOOK
LIKE THAT!

PECH...
N-N-NO MORE.
W-WI-WIZARD.
EVIL WI-ZARD.
SPELL.

HOW LONG
HAVE YOU BEEN
THIS WAY?

WEEKS,
M-MONTHS, TIME IS
LOST TO ME.

TIME.
MY NAME.
THE STONE.
ALL LOST.



The unusual trio left the next day, traveling east; away from Drizzet's beloved cavern.

Clacker led the way, re-tracing his path back to the wizard who had cursed him.

It was not a pleasant journey... the enchanted pech became confused easily and led them down a number of false trails.

But then, as exhaustion was setting in...



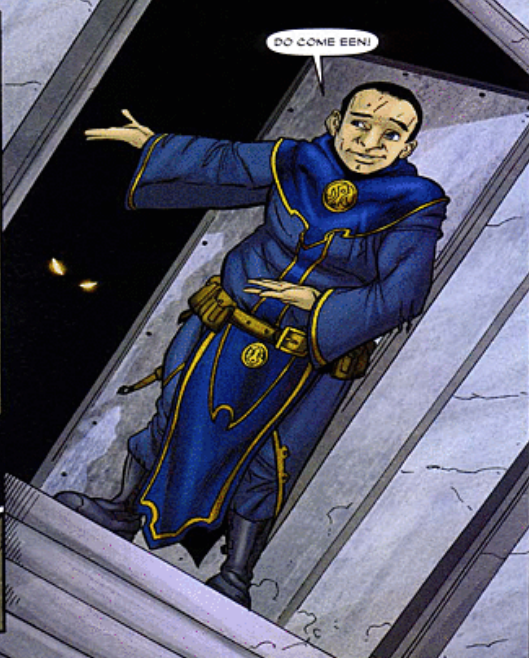
THERE!



A--A TOWER OF
PURE ADAMANTITE! I'VE
NEVER--HOW DID HE BUILD
SUCH A THING?

MAGIC.









House Baenre, first
House of Menzoberranzan...



WHAT NEWS?

ANY INFORMATION I
MIGHT HAVE WOULD BE USELESS
TO YOU, MATRON BAENKE.

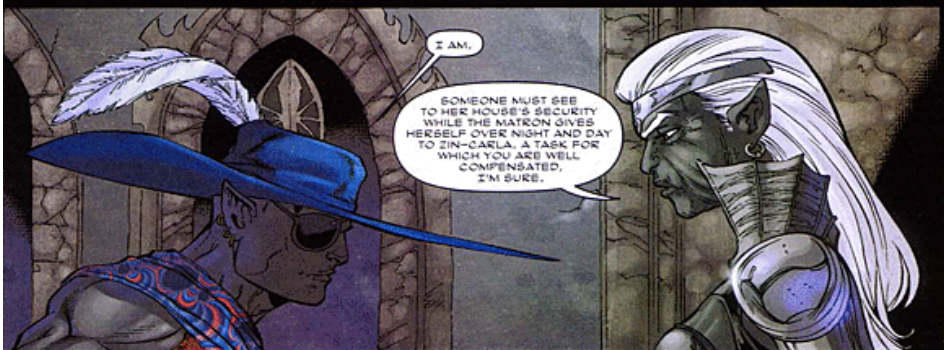
AFTER ALL,
MENZOBERKANZAN
IS YOUR CITY.



ENOUGH FLATTERY,
JAZLAXLE. YOU ARE STILL
BEING EMPLOYED BY MATRON
MALICE DO'URDEN?

I AM.

SOMEONE MUST SEE
TO HER HOUSE'S SECURITY
WHILE THE MATRON GIVES
HERSELF OVER NIGHT AND DAY
TO ZIN-CARLA, A TASK FOR
WHICH YOU ARE WELL
COMPENSATED,
I'M SURE.





AND WHAT OF MALICE'S HER HEALTH?

POOR, THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN THE MATRON SAY THAT THE RITUAL IS DRAINING HER LIFE AWAY.



HMM, ONLY ONCE BEFORE HAS ZIN-CARLA LASTED SO LONG, AND THEN I--IT DID NOT END WELL.

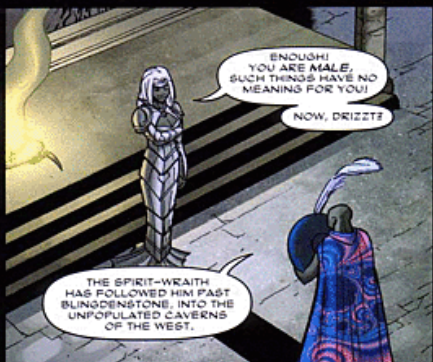
WITH EACH PASSING DAY, THE SPIRIT-WEAITH GROWS STRONGER.

STRONGER? IT IS UNDEAD.



THE SPIRIT-WEAITH'S FLESH IS DEAD, BUT ITS SOUL IS ALIVE. THAT IS THE POWER OF ZIN-CARLA. IT GRANTS THE ANIMATED CORPSE ALL THE SKILLS IT POSSESSED IN LIFE, BUT ALONG WITH THOSE SKILLS COME MEMORIES AND A WILL.

ONLY A POWERFUL HIGH PRIESTESS CAN HOPE KEEP THE CREATURE UNDER HER CONTROL, AND IF MATRON MALICE IS WEAKENING...



ENOUGH! YOU ARE MERE, SUCH THINGS HAVE NO MEANING FOR YOU!

NOW, DRIZZT?

THE SPIRIT-WEAITH HAS FOLLOWED HIM PAST BLINDENSTONE, INTO THE UNPOPULATED CAVERNS OF THE WEST.



UNPOPULATED? HARDLY, THERE ARE THINGS LIVING IN THOSE TUNNELS, DARLANE.



DANGEROUS THINGS.

The journey from the adamantite tower was one of somber silence.



What Clacker had done to the human wizard made no sense. With one blow from his great claws, the pech had doomed himself to life as a hook horror.



No rational being would have done such a thing, but an animal...



Perhaps Belwar had spoken true. Perhaps Clacker was more monster than pech.



The thought sickened Drizzet to his very core.

His only hope was that, once back in the comfort of their new home, he and Belwar could think of some other way to help their poor friend.



Drizzt was sorely disappointed.

MAAGGA
CANNARA!
WHAT BEAST
DID THIS?!

COULD THOSE
BIRD-MEN HAVE
FOUND US?

NO, THE
BLADES THAT MADE
THESE CUTS WERE
FINELY CRAFTED,
AS ONLY—

DROW WEAPONS!
MY MOTHER'S
ASSASSINS HAVE
FOUND US!

WHAT? HOW?!

DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE MATRON
MALICE. WHOEVER SHE'S SENT
MUST HAVE FOLLOWED OUR TRAIL
TO THE WIZARD'S TOWER. BUT
THEY'LL BE BACK IN HOURS,
MAYBE LESS.

SOME CLACKER!
WE HAVE TO GO, NOW!

*And thus did Drizzt Do'Urdon
lose the only true home he had ever known.*

The companions ran all day and all night, not daring to stop.

Drizzt knew he had to put more distance between himself and his evil kin.

He could **never** stop running.

THIS ISN'T
RIGHT. IT'S
TOO QUIET.

FWOOP

WHIP

FWOOP

UHH...

